

**SPS-RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UNDERTAKEN/PLANNED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC)**

Communication from the International Trade Centre

The following communication, dated 20 February 2007, is being circulated at the request of the ITC.

1. ITC provides technical assistance to three target groups: (i) to enterprises to strengthen their international competitiveness; (ii) to trade-support institutions to develop capacity to provide a more comprehensive service to their clients; (iii) to policymakers, *inter alia*, to support in the integration of the business sector into the global economy. There are various areas in which ITC intervenes to achieve its objectives. This paper highlights some of the ITC activities in the area of Standards and Quality Management and in particular in the area of SPS.

**Projects/activities in the area of SPS from 2005 up date**

1. **"Upgrading Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' - Capability in Fish Inspection Services"**  
**Asian Trust Fund (ATF)<sup>1</sup> – PHI/A01/01B Philippines (May 2005 – February 2006)**

2. The objective of the project was to improve the effectiveness of inspection services in the Philippines for fishery exports and the quality and safety of fish supplies to meet the requirements of import markets. This contributed to address some urgent deficiencies highlighted by the European Commission Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) mission<sup>2</sup> regarding fish inspection for export. The Final Tripartite Review Meeting of the ATF Project in the fishery sector confirmed the achievements of the project in terms of strengthening of the central and regional sanitary monitoring and control systems, including its inspection services.

2. **"Improving the inspection capabilities and status of vessels and establishments in the Indonesian fishery sector"**  
**ATF - INS/A1/01B Indonesia (June 2006 – June 2007)**

3. The objective of the project is to strengthen the inspection and auditing services in Indonesia for fishery exports, to improve the quality and safety of the fish processing facilities listed as approved establishments for export to the European Communities. This will enable the Indonesian

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<sup>1</sup> The Asia Trust Fund (ATF), co-financed by the European Commission (EC) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) and managed by ITC, is a channel to provide quick delivery of short-term Trade-Related Technical Assistance, in response to an immediate need identified by a national government or regional organisation (for more information on ATF, visit: <http://www.intracen.org/atf>).

<sup>2</sup> Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), DG Health and Consumer Protection Directorate General.

Competent Authority to conduct a fast review of the approved list of vessels and establishments. The project will contribute to address some urgent deficiencies highlighted by the European Commission FVO mission regarding fish exports to the European Communities.

**3. "Upgrading the capability of the Competent Authorities' and fish facilities in Malaysia of meeting EU fishery requirements"**

**ATF - MAL/A1/01B Malaysia (November 2006 – June 2007)**

4. The objective of the project is to improve the effectiveness of inspection and auditing services in Malaysia for fishery exports and the quality and safety of fish supplies to meet the requirements of import markets. The project will enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Competent Authorities' and industry personnel of the European Communities trade-related policies and requirements pertaining to the export of fishery products to the European Communities. The project will contribute to address some urgent deficiencies highlighted by the European Commission FVO mission regarding fish exports to the European Communities.

**4. "Technical Support for Improving the Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) infrastructure"**

**IF MLW/05/614A Malawi<sup>3</sup> (September 2005 – December 2007)**

5. This project aims at achieving the Millennium Development Goals and human development through private sector development. It will be achieved by building local capacity in the field of Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) both at enterprise level, through the enhancement of the awareness of Malawi enterprises on the importance of standardization issues, and at institutional level, the improvement of the capability of local organizations to deliver SQAM-related services to private enterprises, with the overall aim of supporting enterprises in their endeavour. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS).

6. One of the components of the project is to provide support to some local enterprises (12) for establishing and implementing Food Safety Management Systems (HACCP) in accordance with the Codex standard.

7. Another component is to provide support to local laboratories. In July 2006, a needs assessment was carried out in six testing laboratories and an action plan prepared so that they could start implementing the requirements of the relevant international standard (ISO/IEC 17025 – *Requirements for competence of testing laboratories*) to enable them to obtain international accreditation. In October 2006 additional assistance was provided, including *inter alia*, the review of the progress against recommendations and an updating of the recommendations for improving. Some of these laboratories test food and agricultural products.

**5. "Trade promotion in Tajikistan – Phase II"**

**TAJ/61/104A Tajikistan (October 2006 - December 2008)**

8. The objective of the project is to strengthen the sustainable expansion and diversification of small and medium enterprises (SME) exports in Tajikistan. It aims to develop national capacity for trade development by focusing on business services providers while also addressing institutional issues.

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<sup>3</sup> The Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to least-developed countries (IF) is a multi-agency, multi-donor programme that assists the least-developed countries to expand their participation in the global economy thereby enhancing their economic growth and poverty reduction strategies.

- Immediate Objective 1: To improve the export competitiveness of enterprises in the agro-processing sector in areas where export competitiveness is determined by activities at the enterprise level (such as in product design, quality and safety management or marketing).
- Immediate Objective 2: To strengthen Business Support Services Organizations through increasing the quality and range of their services that can assist potential and actual exporters in becoming more export competitive. The project will also contribute in improving the Standards, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) infrastructure and will assist sector associations in gaining public recognition and increasing their capacity to provide selective services to members and non-members.
- Immediate Objective 3: To consolidate the emerging public-private sector dialogue around developing and implementing sector and national export strategies.

9. An assessment of the national SPS infrastructure was carried out and a road map was prepared for its improvement. A workshop on the SPS Agreement from a business perspective was conducted in November 2006.

10. Assistance will be provided to six enterprises, *inter alia*, in the area of food safety and quality management systems.

11. Awareness seminars will be conducted on ISO 22000 (Food Safety Management Systems) and these will be followed by ISO 22000 Lead Auditor training courses.

**6. "Trade promotion in Kyrgyzstan – Phase II"  
KYR/61/91A Kyrgyzstan (October 2006 - December 2008)**

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**7. "Bangladesh Quality Support Programme"  
BGD/75/21 Bangladesh (April 2006 – December 2008)**

16. The objectives of the project are to:

- Improve private sector understanding on quality and packaging requirements in export markets; and
- Apply the value chain approach to find ways to enhance enterprise competitiveness in these markets (including the development of sectoral strategies).

17. A review of the national infrastructure for SPS was conducted in 2006 and a road map has been prepared for its improvement.

18. The value chain approach will be applied to the horticulture and agro-processed food sectors to improve their competitiveness.

**8. Follow-up of the Workshop on "Influencing and Meeting International Standards: Challenges for developing countries" (from January 2007 – to be determined)**

19. ITC, jointly with the Commonwealth Secretariat published "Influencing and Meeting International Standards: Challenges for developing countries" which is based on case studies carried out in six countries in the areas of Technical Barriers to Trade and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. An international workshop was organized in June 2005 in Geneva to discuss the recommendations for technical assistance from the case studies, in particular those related to improving the participation of developing countries in international standardization. As a follow-up of the workshop, ITC together with the Commonwealth Secretariat is now developing proposals for providing assistance to developing countries to influence international standards which form the basis of SPS measures, as well as to meet SPS measures of importing countries, including those imposed by the private sector, taking into account assistance being provided in this area to avoid duplication.<sup>4</sup>

**9. Regional and National Workshops on the SPS Agreement from a business perspective (2004-2007)**

20. Exporters can take advantage of the benefits that can be derived from the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures for improving their market access. Indeed the obligations imposed on importing countries can be converted into benefits for exporting countries. To facilitate the understanding of these issues, ITC conducts regional and national workshops using as background material an ITC information/training pack entitled "The SPS Agreement: A Business Perspective".

21. Some of the SPS workshops ITC executed/planned are listed herewith:

- National workshops: Bangladesh (June 2004), Kyrgyzstan (November 2006), Tajikistan (November 2006), Malawi and Bangladesh (2007, to be confirmed); and

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<sup>4</sup> All the background documentation, the papers presented and discussed during the workshop and the final report are accessible at the ITC webpage at [www.intracen.org/eqm](http://www.intracen.org/eqm) under the section named "Events".

- Regional workshops: Egypt (October 2004), Zambia (July 2005 – JITAP<sup>5</sup>), Benin (September 2005 – JITAP).

**10. "Product and Market development of Agro-based Products (Mushrooms and Peaches)"  
LES/04/713A (NOVEMBER 2004 – NOVEMBER 2006)**

22. As part of an on-going ITC project funded under the Integrated Framework Trust Fund<sup>6</sup> (Window II) in Lesotho, it was envisaged that an assessment would be made of the potential production and export of mushrooms from the country. Production training has been partially completed and the next phase of capacity building is training stakeholders to achieve a higher level of awareness and capabilities to satisfy international food quality processing, packaging and traceability standards. A workshop was organized in Lesotho about requirements on quality and safety of fruits and vegetables with particular emphasis on mushrooms and on EurepGAP.

**11. Joint ITC/ISO tool: ISO 22000 - Are you ready?**

23. ITC and ISO have been collaborating to develop a software-based self-diagnostic tool on ISO 22000 *Food safety management systems — Requirements for any organization in the food chain*. The tool will help, *inter alia*, small businesses, especially in developing countries and transition economies, operating in the food chain to understand the regulatory requirements for food safety and to make an assessment of their readiness to implement ISO 22000 and obtain some preliminary guidance on implementing the standard. It will be of benefit to enterprises in their effort to improve their market share of food and agricultural products in the global market. The tool will be available in CD-ROM as well as in hard copy in March 2007.

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<sup>5</sup> The Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP) mobilizes the expertise and support of WTO, UNCTAD and ITC to help African country partners benefit from the new multilateral trading system.

<sup>6</sup> The Integrated Framework Trust Fund (ITTF) provides a central point for the deposit of contributions to the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least-Developed Countries.